

March 1956

Volume 35

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LABOUR ORGANISER

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JARROW C.L.P. Applications are invited for the post of full-time Secretary/Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms from **Tom Anderson, 35 Park Road, Jarrow, Co. Durham**, to whom they should be returned not later than 17th March, 1956.

CHIGWELL C.L.P. invites applications for the post of full-time agent. The appointment to be made in consultation with the N.E.C. Application forms can be obtained from the **National Agent, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1**, to whom they must be returned by March 31st.

LUTON B.C.L.P. invites applications for the post of full-time agent. The appointment to be made in consultation with the N.E.C. Application forms can be obtained from the **National Agent, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1**, to whom they must be returned by March 31st.

BIRMINGHAM BOROUGH LABOUR PARTY require an Assistant Organiser to work under the direction of the Borough Party Secretary. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement. Application forms from **Mr. J. H. Nash, 25a Paradise Street, Birmingham 1**, to whom they must be returned not later than 24th March, 1956.

GRAVESEND C.L.P. invites applications for the post of full-time agent. The appointment to be made in consultation with the N.E.C. Application forms can be obtained from the **National Agent, Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1**, to whom they must be returned by 31st March, 1956.

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THE LABOUR ORGANISER

EDITOR: A. L. WILLIAMS

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PRICE FIVEPENCE

Trend towards Labour

THE results of the recent crop of by-elections have been subject to various interpretations. The Chairman of the Conservative Party considers them as having expressed "continued confidence in the Prime Minister and the Government." The Liberal newspapers see in them great encouragement for the Liberal Party.

Practically no newspapers admit that they show any growth in support for the Labour Party.

In fact by-elections are not a good guide to political trends. They are subject to special factors which can have considerable influence on the individual result.

For instance, polling in Leeds North East took place in extreme weather conditions, whereas in Taunton though the weather was very cold, polling day was bright and dry. It is not surprising therefore that there was only a 39.9% poll in Leeds North East and a 75.5% poll in Taunton.

Similarly, the intervention of a third candidate can make comparisons between a by-election and the previous General Election misleading.

At Gainsborough the Labour share of the vote fell by 6.6%, but this was due to the intervention of a Liberal who secured 21.6% of the votes. At Taunton in the General Election the Liberal polled 8.4% of the votes, but at the by-election where there was no Liberal candidate, the Labour vote increased by 9.7%.

Between October and February, 1954-55 there were twelve by-elections. In all

but three of them the Tory share of the vote increased. At Inverness, where there was a Liberal candidate, the Tory share of the vote fell substantially, but so did Labour's share. Labour's share of the vote fell in all of these except South Norfolk where it increased by 3% and at Shoreditch and Finsbury where it increased by 5.5%. In this latter by-election the poll was only 40.6%.

In the eight by-elections in the period October-February 1955-56 the Tory share of the vote fell everywhere except Leeds North East where there was only a 39.9% poll.

Labour increased its share of the vote in four of the five straight fights. In the three, three cornered contests Labour's share of the vote fell, but not so much as the Tory's, and in two of them the Tory was returned on a minority vote.

Certainly the tide is no longer flowing with the Government, though it is not running strong enough against them to cause them to lose any seats. The trend which was consistently against Labour twelve months ago is now much more favourable despite the confusion caused by Liberal intervention, in Torquay, Hereford and Gainsborough, where there is still a Liberal tradition and the Liberal candidates were outstanding personalities. But three swallows do not make a Liberal summer, and it is unlikely that at a General Election the Liberals will be able substantially to improve their position.

The Labour Party can find some encouragement in the by-elections, but it would be fatal to assume that the shift of support from the Government shown by the by-elections necessarily means a Labour victory at the next General Election.

TAUNTON NEARLY MADE IT!

PERHAPS an apt title for our recent by-election would be 'Nearly but not quite' or the 'Squeeze and Freeze' election. Whatever the headline, it is my task to outline some of the problems we had to face and our efforts to overcome them during a mid-winter by-election fought during the last hours of a dying register.

We were well into the initial stages of the campaign before it became clear we were to fight on the old register. Writing up had begun on this basis after we had deleted the names of electors on the new list 'C'. We soon added their names again and began to trace them.

Our people were much more conscious of the postal vote and we commenced a postal vote canvass which was to prove very rewarding. Over 1,200 new postal votes were added to the number already registered, bringing the grand total to 3,523 of whom just under 3,000 polled.

Nearly 1,000 of the new applications passed through our hands and our records show that we received approximately 40% of the postal vote cast. Not yet good enough, but much better than on previous occasions. Special postal vote literature which included a letter from the candidate was sent to every postal voter.

Tracing removals

The age of the register made it essential to use every means to trace removals, including the hundreds who had moved inside the constituency. Our canvass gave us a lot of information and we were able to get lists of council tenant-transfers from the council in the town of Taunton. A very formidable task was then undertaken in writing up slips for every elector on list 'B' and list 'C'.

By sorting these in our home-made sorting office improvised from election envelope boxes, we were able to find the new addresses of many hundreds of people. In all, we were able to re-direct our literature to over 3,000 internal removals as well as make preparations to get them to the poll if found favourable when canvassed.

We sent an explanatory letter to all these people as in most cases they did not get their official poll cards sent on.

We established our H.Q. in a large

former café recently acquired by the Co-operative movement. This gave us a fine window lay-out in one of the best sites in the constituency and provided space to organise our departments.

We were also able to have central sites in three other main centres. The emphasis on good siting and display attracted great attention and set the standard of the campaign.

Paid dividends

We had the good fortune to enlist the services of six agents from nearby constituencies, and these men together with three first-class local men each took charge of a portion of the constituency. This decentralisation was of immense value and paid dividends.

We achieved a new canvass of over 70% of the electorate and we had over 18,000 promises. Most of the uncanvassed were people out during the visits made and the others were in very hostile areas. Our vote of over 19,000 was evidence of the accuracy of the canvass.

In addition to an election address to each elector, we distributed 12,000 copies of a locally produced election special. This distribution was practically all done in one day and we were grateful to coachloads of outside helpers who assisted in this task. Our posters were of 16 sheet and double crown sizes plus window photo bills and name strips.

In addition to countless street corner and village green meetings and factory and canteen meetings, we had a full programme of indoor ones. Our attendances were 400 average in the big centres and 50 average in the villages.

We had several overflow meetings on very cold nights so, as far as Taunton is concerned, it cannot be said that the day of the public meeting is over. We had a first-class list of visiting speakers and we are grateful to them for coming along.

Our Transport Officer was in great demand and we used a great deal of transport to keep us mobile in this very large constituency. Besides polling day we had great need of cars for the meetings programmes, etc., but thanks to many volunteers despite the frozen state of the roads on some nights, we managed quite well.

Our polling day system varied in different areas. For the villages and small

(Continued on page 47)

Grand tale of endeavour

by Herbert Drinkwater

It is impossible to look back on this last half a century without a feeling of gratitude and pride for all that has been achieved.

SO writes Hugh Gaitskell in a Foreword to that charming new pamphlet of the Party, cased in vigorous red; and entitled "Voice of the People". And this commemoration publication on the jubilee of the Parliamentary Labour Party is a timely justification for such pride.

All sections of the Party will agree that this bobs-worth ought to be in the hands of every Labourite. I go further. "Voice of the People" is a page of Modern English History. It ought to be taught to every school-child, and it is essential to every school-child who would earn a really worth-while G.C.E.

AN EPOCH

For not only is the story that is told an epic of the British people—a grand tale of great endeavour—but the event it celebrates marks an epoch. We see a new era dawn: and the shadow cast before it of a mighty instrument that is to change the whole life of a people—not yet to change much the formidable economic structure of society, but nevertheless to change completely the accepted conceptions of society—to bring the welfare of its people into reality as the first aim of society. And goodbye to the old evil way of devil take the hindmost.

The special souvenir brochure, as Morgan Phillips nicely and rightly calls it, closes with a rare tribute to the pioneers "and defeated candidates whose names have passed unsung into oblivion" and to "the comrades who now carry the banner". Good. And it is because the picture in the constituencies in the early times is worth recording side by side with the national celebration that this article is written.

1906. Yes, I remember. And fifty years later, at nearly 80 years of age, am I not glad that I was in the happy throng then; and in it years before that!

To get the record right let me recall that 30 years before this epic year an

THE author of this article founded the 'Labour Organiser' some 35 years ago and was for many years its editor and manager—posts he combined with those of General Secretary of the National Union of Labour Organisers and Election Agents and District Organiser of the Labour Party.

event happened in which I was deeply involved. For I was born in 1876; and the stars, I am sure, were propitious, because income tax that year, and never before or after, stood at 1d. in the £.

Not that income tax worried the pioneers, and certainly not me. It doesn't—if one has twelve children. Now that there are 25 grand-children besides I sometimes wonder if some early Socialists took too literally Bobbie Blatchford's repeated advice to "Make Socialists". Here I point the finger of rebuke to any Labour agent who doesn't keep a marked register. I still do.

After that divergence I'd better get back to my line. Just one more from the personal record however. In 1893 I *nearly* joined the I.L.P. But when I announced my intention, the sub-editor's boot, which I neatly avoided, seemed to discourage essays and adventures towards Socialism. It was a "Liberal" paper.

THE BEGINNING

In 1899, in another town, I *did* join the I.L.P. And that began the life that liveth. Few men can have had a happier life, or can look back, as I do today, to the joy of so much excitement, and to the realisation of so many ideals. But there's a heck of a lot of changes in society I want yet. And I won't die happy till I get 'em.

Labour folk blunder when they seek to romanticise the pioneers. Believe me, a more quarrelsome lot never existed! Socialism, you see, hadn't settled down

as a creed (nor has it now, I believe), and the views expressed, ranging from sheer revolution to "Tolstoyism", were kaleidoscopic, and so almost was the choice of "Socialist" organisations.

The Marxists, in their several organisations, did have a common foundation; but not one brick they build on that foundation matched another. We idealists (rudely called Labour-fakirs) preached the brotherhood of man, but we would (metaphorically) crack a brother on the head for his deviations, if only to keep in fashion, for the whole Socialist movement was a sort of Donnybrook Fair.

We were eager, but not nice. But one thing we *would* do that might hardly be done today: We would harbour a ragged or a smelly "brother", a real down and outer; and shove him on the soapbox, treating him afterwards to a faggot and peas—if the collection ran to the 2d. required by the greedy capitalist soup-seller.

UNEMPLOYMENT RIFE

One must remember that the "great unwashed" as the rich so contemptuously dubbed the poor of that day were not as the democracy of 1956. Unemployment was rife, "relief" was worse than prison, homes could be smashed up any day and in many ways: and in that ragged tramp or hand-cuffed "criminal" walked, "but for the Grace of God", Herbert Drinkwater, or others like him.

I myself tramped once: but I won't recall it. In a passing hobo one might in those days sometimes find, and *did*, a Socialist from another town. Indeed it is forgotten now that many of the pioneers were often, or always, on their backs, and that relief or hospitality to unfortunate comrades was commonplace, and rarely refused.

There were, of course, lots of middle-class "gents" in the old days, brave men who helped to build, who would speak at street corners, help to finance, and were not afraid to rub shoulders with the poorest. But in the main the pioneers were poor men rightly struggling to be free.

Today's movement may be wrong in romanticising these dead and gone battalions, but in one respect they earned it. For the faith of that ragged-trousered gang was of the faith that moves mountains. We quarrelled over whether it would take 50 or 100 years to bring about Socialism, but nobody ever doubted the

ultimate victory, or that Socialism *would* come. And it is in that faith, live I, one of the last and the humblest of those who have gone before.

It was a queer mixture that presented the Labour and Socialist case prior to 1906. There were Trade Unionists (many of them Lib-labs), I.L.P.ers, S.D.F.ers, Fabians, Christian Socialists, Guild Socialists, Single Taxers, S.L.P.ers, and several smaller fry. But though they quarrelled like Kilkenny cats they achieved a curious unity at times. Was this the father of that indefinable spirit of unity that has kept the Labour Party together through even worse divisions than those that afflict it now? I wonder.

Organisationally the Labour victories of January, 1906 brought a change to all that. Soon lots more seats were clamouring to be fought. Much of the old warring and confused effort became channelled, and when 12 years later the new constitution was adopted the Labour Party became adult and of full stature. Its infancy and its teen years left behind, Labour at eighteen was of full age: and it has acted (more or less) as an adult ever since.

In 1906 in Birmingham we only missed victory in one seat by a few hundred votes. A few months later I became Divisional Party Secretary of the newly formed L.R.C. Next year we lowered the Chamberlain flag for the first time in Birmingham, and though it was only a Guardians' election, a smashing double victory set the course for the future. It's all red now on an electoral map—there and for many constituencies around.

I have always been proud that in 1907 the Labour Party reproduced in its *Quarterly Bulletin* a device of mine for furthering Registration among the Trade Unions—for registration was a complicated and a vital job then.

ORGANISATION PROBLEMS

The problems of organisation in 1906 though (as today) resolving themselves fundamentally into the simple formula of "Know your vote and Poll your Vote", nevertheless differed widely in detail and in volume from the manifold problems of today. I have always maintained that organisational problems are in a *constant* state of flux or change. That is why in 1920 I established the *Labour Organiser*—to study these changing problems and tackle them. And that is why the *Labour*

Organiser comes always fresh today—thirty-five years later.

Changes have taken place in the numbers, character and temper of electorates, in social customs, in social demands, in invention, in the law of Franchise and Elections, in Local Government, in the fortunes and formations of the classes we oppose or stand for: in a dozen other things. No war is like the last; no human movement ever constant, and the world is never still. That is why I like living and why politicians live so long; for with change there is new life.

THE FOUNDATIONS

A new difficulty is a fresh foe—a new napper to knock: and laugh at afterwards. In a nation's ways there may be much sorrow—but joy too if one looks for it. And the laughter that comes with Victory is not some illusive Holy Grail, but a certainty if one will but succeed. Please note—you pessimists!

In 1906 there were few Local Labour Parties or Labour Representation Committees (L.R.C.s), as they were mostly called. Indeed, even after 1918 elections were sometimes fought without a Local Party, and with scratch Election Committees. But slipshod electioneering never was smiled on by Headquarters. Instead they recommended two little books published by Vacher and Sons in 1906, and entitled "Elections and How to Fight Them" and "Municipal Elections—and How to Fight Them". Much out-of-date they still adorn my bookshelf as a reminder of the enthusiasts who studied them and the Trojans who laboured to carry out the work: and laid the foundations for a greater victory that will never be lost again.

And so with a heart still stout and hopes unquenched I must bring this article to a close, again thanking the compilers of "Voice of the People" for a job well done.

But there is yet a thought unexpressed. Fifty odd years is a hell of a long time. And I do so want to see Socialism in My Time. Can't we hurry up? I know we've had a helping, but I want a second, and a third. I want the whole pudding. Again, CAN'T WE HURRY UP?

In order to hurry up we want:

- 1. To intensify Socialist propaganda emphasising the altruistic side of Socialism as well as its material blessings.
- 2. To distribute and sell more literature.

- It is here our Local Parties fall down.
- 3. To train better candidates and better agents.
- 4. To inspire by the spirit of Socialism itself the tens of thousands of workers who ought to be seeking their own salvation by helping to do the things above.
- 5. Finally we want to teach the workers that the hope of a New Heaven and a New Earth in return for pennies is now doomed. It's pounds not pennies that are wanted now. In 1906 we didn't grudge 6d. a month, and often 1/- a week. Work that out in money values today—and don't blush to demand the price for the job: the job of making the Socialist state.

So again, HURRY UP. And I will wait—at any rate until you begin.

(Continued from page 44)

towns we used a simple 'master register' and knocking-up lists. For the towns of Taunton and Wellington we used the prepared typed promise lists with several copies and on the week-end before polling day the typewriters clattered well into the night.

No system is fool-proof but our key workers are agreed that this system is the best they have yet tried. No doubt we can improve as we go on but we were able to keep the knockers-up going almost to close of poll without much waste of effort.

We were honoured to have Harold Wilson with us on polling day. His unobtrusive, but thorough, oversight of us in action was very welcome and we look forward to his comments on ways and means of improving things next time. For the moment let us, without becoming complacent, express the hope that in Taunton we have sold the penny-farthing and that, although we are not yet jet-propelled, we have considerable power in our engines.

RESULT:

May, 1955	Feb., 1956
Cons. 22,962	Cons. 19,820
Lab. 17,420	Lab. 19,163
Lib. 3,864	
Maj. 5,542	Maj. 657

Bob Chamberlain

CANDIDATES

THE following were endorsed as prospective Parliamentary Candidates at the February meeting of the National Executive Committee:

Blaydon	...	Mr. R. Woof
Walthamstow	East	Mr. J. Dixon
Walthamstow	West	Mr. E. C. Redhead
Hereford	...	Mr. B. C. Stanley
Dover	...	Mr. H. W. Lee
Clitheroe	...	Mr. W. Rutter
Liverpool,		
West Derby		Mr. A. Paxton
Gainsborough	...	Mr. H. D. Walston
Wandsworth	Central	Mrs. P. Llewelyn Davies
Taunton	...	Mr. R. Pestell
Rye	...	Mr. R. Balch
Chippenham	...	Mr. W. J. Smith
North East Leeds		Mr. H. M. Waterman
Montgomery	...	Mr. D. C. Jones
North Angus & Mearns		Mr. C. Buick
Central Ayrshire		Mr. A. C. Manuel
Berwick & East Lothian		Mr. P. Jones
Moray & Nairn		Mr. M. Mackay



CO-OPERATIVE PARTY CANDIDATES RUNNING IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE LABOUR PARTY

Ealing North	...	Mr. W. S. Hilton
Wythenshawe	...	Mr. A. Morris



WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE

West Derbyshire	...	Mr. R. B. Stirling
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Plan to build up our organisation

AS well as twelve Organising Assistants some thirty new agents are to be appointed following the allocation by the National Executive Committee of £50,000 a year for organising help to the constituencies. These appointments are likely to be made within the next twelve months.

Organising Assistants are to work in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford, Glasgow and Edinburgh, and two will be employed in county constituencies in the South West.

It will be their task to build up party organisation, to help to secure adequate electoral records and to improve electoral machinery.

They will be employed directly by the National Executive Committee, who will make the appointments, and they will be under the direct supervision of the Regional Organisers, who will plan their work.

In the case of agencies which are subsidised by the National Executive Committee there is to be a change in the method of appointment. The post will be advertised and applications will be made to the National Agent who will be responsible for preparing a panel from which the Constituency Labour Party, in consultation with the Regional Organiser, will prepare its short list of applicants for interview. The Constituency Labour Party will then make the appointment from those interviewed.

Though the Constituency Labour Party will be the employing body, as a condition of the payment of the National Executive Committee grant, the agent will carry out organising duties agreed upon jointly by the Constituency Labour Party and the Regional Organiser, and the grant will continue to be paid only if this work is performed satisfactorily.

New Agent

THE National Executive Committee, at its February meeting, approved the following appointment:

MISS J. CALTHORPE — as Secretary-Agent for Woolwich West. Miss Calthorpe, who is 23, comes from Colchester, where she has been a Party officer for four years.

CALENDAR FOR BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

(ENGLAND & WALES)

including Metropolitan Boroughs

POLLING DAY: THURSDAY, 10th MAY, 1956

Compiled by LEN SIMS, National Agent's Department

Notice of Election	Not later than	Tuesday, 17th April
Delivery of Nomination Papers and Consent to nomination not later than NOON		Tuesday, 24th April
Notice of decisions on Nomination and publication of Statement of persons nominated by NOON..		Wednesday, 25th April
Declaration, in writing, of Name and Address of Election Agent not later than NOON ..		Thursday, 26th April
Delivery of Notice of Withdrawal not later than NOON		Thursday, 26th April
Application for Extension of Polling Hours not later than NOON		Thursday, 26th April
Notice of Poll		Friday, 4th May
Notice of Appointment of Polling and Counting Agents not later than		Monday, 7th May
POLLING DAY		Thursday, 10th May
The Count		As soon as practicable after Close of Poll
Claims to be sent to Election Agent in respect of Election Expenses by		Thursday, 24th May
Payments, by Election Agent, of claims in respect of Election Expenses by		Thursday, 7th June
Return and Declaration of Election Agent as to Election Expenses by		Thursday, 14th June
Declaration by Candidate		Within seven days of actual transmission of Agent's Return and Declaration.

Note : Where the Declaration of Poll is made on the following day (after midnight of 10th May) another day can be added for Claims, Payments and Returns.

Urban and Rural Districts

DAY OF ELECTION (Polling Day) ..	Monday, 7th May		Tuesday, 8th May	
	RURAL	URBAN	RURAL	URBAN
Notice of Election .. Not later than	11th April	13th April	12th April	14th April
Delivery of Nomination Papers and Consent not later than NOON	18th April	20th April	19th April	21st April
Notice of decisions on Nominations and publication of Statement as to persons nominated by NOON	21st April	21st April	23rd April	23rd April
Declaration, in writing, of Name and Address of Election Agent not later than NOON ..	23rd April	23rd April	24th April	24th April
Delivery of Notices of Withdrawals by NOON	23rd April	23rd April	24th April	24th April
Application for Extension of Polling Hours not later than NOON	23rd April	23rd April	24th April	24th April
Notice of Poll	1st May	1st May	2nd May	2nd May
Notice of Appointment of Polling and Counting Agents not later than	3rd May	3rd May	4th May	4th May
Day of Election	7th May	7th May	8th May	8th May
The Count				
Claims to be sent to Election Agent in respect of Election Expenses by	*21st May	*21st May	22nd May	22nd May
Payment, by Election Agent, of claims in respect of Election Expenses by	4th June	4th June	5th June	5th June
Return and Declaration of Election Agent as to Election Expenses by	11th June	11th June	12th June	12th June
Declaration of Candidate as to Election Expenses	The Declaration can be sent within 14 days of the day of election but it is wisest to ensure the Declaration is made by the day of election.			

Notes : Where the declaration of Candidates, Payments, and Returns are made on Whit Monday.

FOR Council Elections, 1956

Wednesday, 9th May		Thursday, 10th May		Friday, 11th May		Saturday, 12th May	
RURAL	URBAN	RURAL	URBAN	RURAL	URBAN	RURAL	URBAN
16th April	16th April	14th April	17th April	16th April	18th April	17th April	19th April
23rd April	23rd April	21st April	24th April	23rd April	25th April	24th April	26th April
24th April	24th April	25th April	25th April	26th April	26th April	27th April	27th April
25th April	25th April	26th April	26th April	27th April	27th April	28th April	28th April
25th April	25th April	26th April	26th April	27th April	27th April	28th April	28th April
25th April	25th April	26th April	26th April	27th April	27th April	28th April	28th April
3rd May	3rd May	4th May	4th May	5th May	5th May	7th May	7th May
5th May	5th May	7th May	7th May	8th May	8th May	9th May	9th May
9th May	9th May	10th May	10th May	11th May	11th May	12th May	12th May

as may be practicable after Close of the Poll

23rd May	24th May	24th May	25th May	25th May	26th May	26th May
6th June	7th June	7th June	8th June	8th June	9th June	9th June
13th June	14th June	14th June	15th June	15th June	16th June	16th June

the date on which the Election Agent transmitted the Return of Election Expenses, submitted at the same time.

le on the following day (after midnight) then another day can be added for Claims,

CALENDAR FOR BURGH AND CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS (SCOTLAND)

POLLING DAY: TUESDAY, 1st MAY, 1956

NOTICE OF ELECTION on or within seven days before the fourth Tuesday preceding the day of election	3rd April
DELIVERY OF NOMINATION PAPERS, not later than 4 p.m. on the third Tuesday preceding the day of election	10th April
APPOINTMENT OF ELECTION AGENT; APPLICATION FOR EXTENSION OF POLLING HOURS; NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL OF NOMINATION; delivery of such notices to be not later than 4 p.m. on the second Tuesday preceding the day of election	17th April
NOTICE OF POLL; NOTICE OF UNCONTESTED ELECTION; not later than the Friday preceding the day of election..	27th April
NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF POLLING AND COUNTING AGENTS, to be delivered not later than the fourth day before the day of election	27th April
DAY OF ELECTION (Polling Day) the first Tuesday in May ..	1st May
THE COUNT, as soon as practicable after close of poll	
CLAIMS, to be sent to Election Agent in respect of election expenses, by	15th May
PAYMENTS, by Election Agent, in respect of election expenses, by	29th May
RETURN AND DECLARATION OF ELECTION AGENT as to election expenses, by	5th June
DECLARATION OF CANDIDATE within seven days of the date on which the Election Agent transmitted his Return of Election Expenses.	

When the declaration of the result of the poll is made on the following day (after midnight of 1st May), another day can be added for Claims, Payments, and Return.

Planning is a necessity

To function effectively the local party has to keep solvent. This article demonstrates how the proper assessment of income and expenditure and shrewd management can together ensure that the maximum benefit is derived from party activity.

THE very mention of the phrase 'budgetary control' usually brings two responses—"It's all very well for a business, but we're a political party and don't have to make a profit" and "Never had it before and we managed quite well".

Let us reject these two comments as being an out-of-date, muddling-through, attitude and let us have a serious look at the subject. A cheap exercise-book and plenty of good faith may have been adequate in the early days of the Movement, but this is 1956 and modern methods of management ought to be used.

It goes without saying that the effectiveness of a local party depends to a large extent upon its financial resources. It follows therefore that the strength of a party can be increased by effective and prudent control over its finances.

The constituency party is the basic unit of organisation in the Labour Party, and the expenditure can be considerable for an active party, including the salary and expenses of an agent, the maintenance of an office, stationery and printing; the cost of educational and propaganda work, and often a local publication. In addition, a fund ought to be maintained for fighting Parliamentary and Local Government elections.

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The aim of budgetary control is to have a proper assessment in terms of money of the policy and activities of a party, and a constant control to see that policy fulfilled and the activities economically completed. Planning in advance is essential for all activities both in terms of the details of execution and in terms of money.

If the cost of the activity (or a series of activities) is self-supporting, or if funds are sufficient to finance it, there is no problem. If, on the other hand, funds are

inadequate steps must be taken first of all to raise more money to cover the deficit. Should this be impossible or insufficient, priorities must be established and maintained so that money resources are used to the best advantage.

Budgetary control for a local party is quite a simple matter when compared with the methods used to manage a well-run manufacturing or trading enterprise. The form of control required for a party is one over income and expenditure. To look at income first—the basic source is from subscriptions and where there is a regular, efficient system of collection the money will come in regularly throughout the year with perhaps a peak at the beginning of the year where members pay the annual subscription in one sum.

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Where there is no regular flow of income, it means that expenditure in the early part of the year must be made out of cash reserves. As a general rule, cash in the hands of officers should be kept to a minimum; and money on current account at the bank if surplus to immediate requirements should be invested so as to produce further income.

To illustrate with the Labour Party national finances—there are two peak periods of income in March and in December. This means that the income from the preceding December is usually adequate to meet the normal day-to-day expenditure up to the succeeding March. The income received in that month, as it is surplus to current requirements is invested to earn interest, and these investments in turn are realised over the remaining nine months of the year to meet the deficit between income and expenditure each month.

Other income either from social activities and from the sale of literature usually involves expenditure which will be recouped later out of the proceeds. If the preliminary expenses cannot be met

out of normal income, there will be a call on the cash reserves. Where the social activities are held soon after the outlay and the literature is quickly sold there is no cause for concern.

On the other hand, if there is considerable delay money is unremuneratively locked up when it could be earning further interest. Where suppliers give credit terms, the usual period being 30 days, the matter is of small concern but where prompt cash settlement is demanded it is a different situation. It is to be remembered that prompt payment at the expiry of 30 days credit is part of the bargain and not to pay then is a breach of contract. Apart from getting a bad name for the Party it means that further credit terms are unlikely to be granted.

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In the same manner as income, expenditure may be irregularly spread over the year. Where an agent is employed his salary, superannuation contributions and national insurance contributions must be paid monthly as determined by his contract of service. Where office assistance is engaged there are also similar regular payments.

A number of expense items tend to vary little from year to year and are principally office rent and rates, insurance and Schedule A tax. The amounts payable and the due dates for payment can be assessed fairly accurately and allowed for in the plan of expenditure.

The expense of sending a delegate to Annual Conference is a regular item occurring about the same time each year. The cash for the pooled fare quota, the delegate's fee and his allowance for accommodation and expenses must be paid before conference opens.

A Party cannot send a delegate or have a motion on the Agenda if it has not paid the affiliation fees and By Election fee for the previous year. The affiliation fee for 1956 is 6d. a member with a minimum of £6—and is collected by the Party nationally, by the issue of membership cards at 6d. each.

Local parties are asked to forward full cash payment with their order for cards at the beginning of the year. Where this is difficult cards can be issued on credit terms provided that the order is accompanied by a deposit of one-quarter of the value of the cards ordered and the balance

paid by instalments. Unused cards will be accepted only up to the 31st January following and credit allowed. Record-keeping is simplified if local parties settle their account for membership cards before the 31st January.

The other expenses incurred in the year are usually variable with the administration of the party (e.g., postage stationery and telephone) and its activities (e.g., hire of halls and publicity for public meetings, printing and propaganda).

A further form of expenditure is electioneering. There are of course the Local Government elections each year which have to be paid for at the time but, in addition, a prudent party will each year put to one side a sum of money which over a period of say, three years, will be adequate or substantially sufficient to finance a General Election candidate.

Expenditure on capital items such as office furniture, typewriters, duplicators and loud-speaker units must all be planned in advance as they represent funds which are permanently locked up and which usually can only be realised at a loss.

In my article on yearly accounts in November's issue of the *Labour Organiser* it was said that as normal practice the treasurer should prepare a budget for the succeeding year along with the Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet for the previous year. Although the treasurer is responsible for presenting the budget to the Annual Meeting it will be compiled from plans of the party for the new year as expressed by the various officers responsible for specific activities.

They will measure in terms of money the costs and the results of the proposed activities month by month for the full year. When all the figures and relevant information have been collected together it will then be the task of the treasurer and the finance committee to examine them. The committee will ascertain from past accounts what has been spent against each item and take into consideration any unusual change which might have occurred in those years.

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The committee will then examine each sphere of activity, the policy which has been determined for it, and the plans prepared in pursuance of that policy, first separately and then jointly with a view to co-ordinating the various activities for

the overall benefit of the local party and the promotion of its objectives. Where financial circumstances are such, it will be necessary to establish priorities and to modify proposals so that the total expenditure is within the total income.

When the budget has been agreed upon it can be presented for endorsement by the general committee and the various officers will then be able to execute the activities for which they are responsible within the framework and scope of their budget. Working in their own sphere they will be implementing a policy and programme which has been agreed upon for the whole party.

A complete plan has been prepared of financial needs and the standards to be obtained in relation to every aspect of activity and now a control is necessary that the plan and standards are maintained by subsequent continuous checking and corrective action.

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It is not easy to go into details of this form of control because of varying local circumstances. Information must be presented in the form of statements, promptly, simply and appropriately and related to a period of time usually monthly, quarterly and half-yearly. Unnecessary information is to be avoided—the information required is whether the programme and standards are adhered to and if not, why not.

It is not absolutely essential to stick rigidly to the plan—if those accepted standards can be exceeded so much the better. To simply say at the end of year that the budget has been adhered to serves no useful purpose. Any variation from the budget is not in itself important, it is the *reason* for the variation that is important. An investigation of results will show weakness in organisation or activities.

To quote a few examples: if the subscriptions are expressed in terms of the average sum per member on the books deficiencies in collection will be shown. If for instance a Party has 2,000 members the absolute income at 6/- per person is £600 but if the income received is only £275 the average per person is 2/9d. and this would be considered a poor result.

An increasing annual average is to be aimed for. A low average not only means lack of assured income but that the membership generally is not regularly

contacted both for collection of subscriptions and publicity and propaganda purposes.

If the proceeds from the sale of literature do not substantially exceed the cost of purchase, a weakness is indicated either by the literature remaining unsold or not being properly accounted for. As there is no standard profit margin on Labour Party publications, records of literature stocks should show values both at purchase and at selling price. Discrepancies between the selling value of literature bought and the sum of the value of sales plus value of stock call for investigation.

Stationery and literature stocks are as important as cash and should be properly controlled. The telephone account along with other office expenses should be scrutinised—a long-distance telephone call is much more expensive than a letter, and as well as being cheaper a letter is a written record should reference to the communication be made later.

Where social activities are concerned it is not easy to forecast support and thus the gross proceeds will vary with circumstances. The expense, however, can be budgeted. Where an activity is deliberately run at a loss for publicity or propaganda purposes, it is necessary that the deficit be budgeted in order that the amount can be afforded in relation to the year's finances and that the loss is money well spent.

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It is not easy to describe Budgetary Control for a Party—but once the importance of it is grasped—it is a process of management which develops with experience. To sum up, budgetary control for a local party means:

1. A forecast of essential and possible activities in terms of money;
2. A selection of those activities for the overall benefit of the Party;
3. A plan to operate each approved activity within a budget;
4. A continuous control of that plan with corrective action being taken as required.

Solvency, the ability to meet debts over the financial year, is no longer the test of a successful party. Planning, with sound and effective management is a necessity for the running of a local party in these modern times.

R. FAULDING

Writing up the Minutes

WHAT are Minutes? They are a brief, complete and accurate account of business transacted at a meeting and entered by the secretary in the appropriate minute book.

Minutes should indicate the date and place of a meeting, the number of delegates, or members, present, motions in the form they are put by the Chairman, movers of such motions and seconders, where a seconder is required, and the number of votes cast for and against the motion.

Such points as the chairman's decision on matters of order, and the date and place of next meeting also should be recorded.

Some organisations do not record in their minutes the actual vote, but simply indicate the majority decision. There are some organisations where the actual names of all present are entered in the minute book, but this procedure would not be practicable in the majority of cases.

Secretaries should avoid writing minutes almost in the form of an essay. Business transacted and the decisions taken thereon should stand out clearly, and this result cannot be achieved unless minutes are written with precision.

FOR ACCURACY ONLY

The minutes of a full meeting of delegates or members are presented for accuracy only. They should be written and read by the Secretary.

Immediately after the minutes have been read the Chairman should ask for the following motion to be moved and seconded "That the minutes be passed as a correct record".

If that motion is carried the chairman should immediately sign and date the minutes. The chairman's signature is vital from a legal point of view. His next duty is to ask "Are there any questions arising from the minutes?"

Questions should be for information only, and the chairman must not permit any general discussion to arise from such questions. Any delegate or member wishing to raise a discussion arising from the

minutes must notify the chairman of his intention to do so at the end of the meeting under "Other Business".

Unless a chairman is firm in handling the minutes half the time of this month's meeting may well be spent discussing the business and decisions of last month's meeting.

ERRORS AND OMISSIONS

If a member feels there is an error or omission in the minutes he should rise immediately after they have been read and point out the error or omission. The secretary may acknowledge there has been a mistake, but if he does not accept the correction then the member is entitled to move an amendment with the object of rectifying the error. If such an amendment is seconded and carried then the necessary corrections must be made. These should be made at once by the secretary and initialled by the chairman.

When the minutes have been corrected the motion put by the chairman should be "That the minutes as amended be passed as a correct record".

The minutes of an Executive Committee should be dealt with in the same manner when presented to the Executive Committee, but when those minutes come before a full meeting of delegates or members, the full meeting is not concerned with the accuracy, but with the policy and recommendations contained therein.

Sometimes Executive Committee minutes are presented in the form of a report, but whether presented as minutes or as a report, the first motion to be put by the chairman should be "That the minutes (or report) be taken as read".

Following this formal motion the chairman should then give an opportunity to discuss the contents of the minutes, or the report, by asking if there are any matters arising.

The meeting is then at liberty to refer back any item of the minutes or the report with which it does not agree. The Executive Committee might then have to consider these items once again.

The Executive Committee may have referred certain items in the minutes to

the General Committee, and if so these items will appear on the agenda.

When adequate time has been allowed for discussion the chairman should then put one of the following motions. If no issues have arisen the motion should be "That the minutes of the Executive Committee be endorsed".

If items in the minutes appear on the agenda the correct motion should be "That the minutes of the Executive Committee be endorsed with the exception of those items appearing on the agenda".

If certain items in the minutes have been referred back to the Executive Committee for further consideration the motion should be "That the minutes of the Executive Committee be endorsed with the exception of items . . ."

The question of rescinding will be dealt with in a later article, but it should be noted that notice of motion to rescind a decision recorded in the minutes must be given, and a Chairman would be out of order in permitting any motion to be moved following the reading of the minutes which would be in opposition to resolutions embodied in the minutes.

A secretary who knows how to write up minutes and a chairman who knows the correct manner in which to deal with the different types of minutes are worth their weight in gold to any organisation. It is also just as important that members should understand the significance of the correct motions which should be moved in order that minutes are dealt with expeditiously.

Doing the 'usual' unusually well

THE Newport and District Local Labour Party in the Saffron Walden constituency deserves special commendation on its individual membership. Newport, with an electorate of approximately 800 is the centre of activity, but the local party includes members from three neighbouring villages, having a total electorate of about 600.

Out of this small electorate the local party has enrolled 175 members, that is approximately one member for every eight electors.

When asked to comment on the prosperity of this party the secretary, Mrs. A. G. Salaman, gave the following reason:

- (i) *regular monthly committee meetings;*
- (ii) *a system of collective responsibility for the collection of individual subscriptions. Every member of the committee undertakes to collect some subscriptions. These are divided between them partly on geographical and partly on personal considerations;*
- (iii) *the regularity of functions which take place every year. In addition to the routine business and educational work the programme includes public meetings, leaflet distribution, social evenings, sale of work, and two or three whist drives;*
- (iv) *the harmonious spirit of the committee which creates the right atmosphere for successful meetings.*

The Newport Local Labour Party does not consider it is doing anything unusual. Perhaps not, but it happens to be doing the "usual" unusually well, and that is the key to successful organisation.

We have made comment in a previous issue of the *Labour Organiser* on the thorough way in which the Cymmer Ward of the Glyncoerrwg Local Labour Party does its job. A study of its annual report shows that this ward is still working with enthusiasm.

Harold Abraham, the secretary, is to be congratulated on the report. It denotes an active individual membership, shows a handsome bank balance, and above all, suggests that there is a warm comradeship among the members which probably accounts for the success of the ward.

Once again the report indicates that its representatives on the urban district council take a very keen interest in the work of the ward. Thirteen meetings were held during 1955 and not one councillor had less than nine attendances. There can be no grumble that the councillors do not play their part in ward activities.

We previously commented on the very valuable information in the Ward Annual Report on the work of each committee of the urban district council. Any member of the party in Cymmer studying this information cannot fail to be well informed on Local Government affairs.

AN INCENTIVE TO COLLECTORS

by **Gordon McAskill**

FOLLOWING the series of articles and letters in which this subject has cropped up, I venture to suggest a system designed to draw the attention of the collectors to the "arrears". In effect, it is a monthly balance sheet, showing the exact position of the collector's "debit" (to use the insurance term). The collecting book alone shows only the amount collected, and treasurers concentrate naturally on that figure.

I believe the psychological value of having to show arrears as a separate

item is bound to make for better collecting. The desire to keep arrears as low as possible, or even attain a monthly "overpaid" is more of an incentive to the average collector than a 5% commission for example.

As per diagram, the account used has two sides. In the right hand column is entered the amount collected for that month (and here I would say that a monthly return is better even if the collection is weekly or fortnightly). The second item in that column is overpaid from last account. That applies of course only where the last account did show an overpaid balance.

The third item on that side, Lapses, is important. It must be agreed that after a certain number of weeks in arrears, a

Specimen Accounts

BRIGHT LOCAL LABOUR PARTY

Collector John Smith

Monthly Account, January, 1956

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To members @ 6d. (300) ..	7	10	—	By monthly collection ..	6	10	—
To members @ 1/- (6) ..	—	6	—	Overpaid from last A/c... ..	—	—	—
Arrears from last A/c. ..	—	—	—	...members' lapsed arrears ..	—	—	—
Other items ..	—	—	—	Other items ..	—	—	—
Overpaid to next A/c. ..	—	—	—	Arrears to next A/c. ..	1	6	—
£ 7	16	0		£ 7	16	00	

Specimen Accounts

BRIGHT LOCAL LABOUR PARTY

Collector John Smith

Monthly Account, February, 1956

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
To members @ 6d. (305) ..	7	13	0	By monthly collection ..	10	2	6
To members @ 1/- (12) ..	—	12	—	Overpaid from last A/c... ..	—	—	—
Arrears from last A/c. ..	1	6	—	1 member's lapsed arrears ..	—	1	6
Other items ..	—	—	—	Other items ..	—	—	—
Overpaid to next A/c. ..	1	3	—	Arrears to next A/c. ..	—	—	—
£ 10	14	0		£ 10	14	00	

member shall be deemed to have lapsed. In showing off a lapse, care must be taken to show all arrears on that member's card. Also, it is important that where a member is lapsed, he be deducted from the figure of "members at 6d." on the next month's account.

This is another advantage of the system. Showing off members as soon as they lapse ensures a true membership figure, and of course it is to the advantage of the collector to show them off as due, since this reduces the amount of arrears in his book. That any collector would willingly lapse a member who might possibly still be "collectible" is unlikely. Indeed, far from encouraging the lapsing of members, the system tends to prevent it, by virtue of the collector having a much closer eye on the arrears position of all his members.

The item in the account "arrears to next a/c." is obviously only used when the total of the right-hand column is less than the total of the other column. Should that be the position in the January account, for example, then the figure entered there is carried forward to the appropriate space in the left-hand column of the February account.

In the left-hand column of the account, the first item is the amount which *could* be collected; i.e., the total number of members multiplied by the monthly subscription.

Below that, any new members, and in Parties where the card is charged at 6d., then obviously the first month's dues from those members is 1/-, which is the sole point of making them, for the first month only, a separate entry.

Next, as already mentioned, the arrears from the last account. If when these entries are made, the total of this column is smaller than the total of the other column, the difference is an "over-paid" balance and is entered in the appropriate place in this account, and carried forward to the second place in the right-hand column of the next month's account.

All this means a few minutes extra work for the treasurer, but I think that every treasurer will agree that if the collecting position can be improved, a few minutes work is well worth while.

At the monthly meeting, instead of commenting on the amount collected that month, read the "Arrears for year, to date".

To the collector, I would say, "Start your collections early and be always a month in advance, rather than a week in arrears. That applies no matter what system is used."

Finally, if I have tended to concentrate on the advantages rather than the workings, of the system, I will be pleased to go into greater detail with anyone interested.

Agents to have more pay

LABOUR Party agents are to have a substantial increase following an agreement reached by the Adjustments Board, and endorsed by the Labour Party National Executive Committee at its meeting on the 22nd February, 1956.

The starting rate for Grade I, to which the great majority of agents belong, has been increased by £50 to £500. The maximum of the Grade will now be £650, a £100 advance, but it will take six years to reach the maximum instead of four years under the old scale.

Grade II to which a relatively small number of agents with special responsibilities belong will be paid under a new scale £550 by six annual increments of £25 to £700.

Service payments for continuous service in the same constituency are to remain. After an agent has reached the maximum of his grade he qualifies for a service payment of £25 a year if he serves four years in the same post, and an additional £25 a year after a further four years in the same post.

A Grade I agent with fourteen years' service, the final eight of which he has had the same post, will now be entitled to £700.

The Adjustments Board also agreed that the salary scale for the new grade of Organising Assistants, who are to be employed directly by the National Executive Committee should be £550 by six annual increments of £25 to £700.

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